

I Am So Behind...

*“What you can’t get with kindness and gentleness,
don’t try to get it in any other way” Pr. Teofil Paraianu*

“I am so behind on everything; I’m behind with my life ...”

“I should be so much further ahead by now.”

“I look at my friends and my colleagues and everyone is ahead of me.

I will never be able to catch up...”.

“ I should have finished my book by now...”

“I keep having this reoccurring dream. I am a child walking with my parents, holding their hands. They walk fast, their feet is so much bigger and it is so hard to keep up with them. I can’t keep up; I let go of their hands and I start falling behind.

I have been falling behind for the past 30 years of my life”.

There are times in life, when we feel just like that. Trying to play the catch-up game pulls us into a swirling pool of internal wars, leaving us exhausted, with no energy left to take the next step to our destination.

I was writing the chapter on “Positive Self- Parenting”, during the time when I had my left arm broken. I was talking about the different parts of ourselves, the child, Little One, and the mature, Wise One, coming together and helping each other pursue our intentions.

After having my arm on cast for weeks, the bone was almost healed, but my whole arm was out of function. My fingers were stuck, unable to make the slightest actions; my shoulder and whole arm was weak, hurting with every movement. I was amazed to suddenly notice the complexity and easiness of the right fingers, hand and arm movements, while the left side was atrophied, unfunctional.

My left arm was back to the baby stage. Almost brand new in its skills and abilities; but it was there. I had my left arm, as unable or useless it was at the moment. The doctor reassured me that the bone was almost healed, able to start the rehabilitation process, despite the pain. My arm/ baby had the potential to learn how to move and function fully, but unable yet to make the smallest movements.

Since my mind was on positive self-parenting I decided to approach my

rehab process from this perspective. My left arm was my Little One until it was able to function on its own. I had to wisely parent it back to its full development.

For once, I had to *accept* that this part of me, my arm, my baby *is where it is* in its development. I had to *start right where I was*, somehow intuitively trusting that, in some weird, incomprehensible ways, I was exactly where I need to be.

In the process of gaining his function, it didn't matter where it used to be a year ago, or it could have been, or it should have been; or why is it where it is. It didn't matter how incredibly proficient (better) the other arm is, or what everybody else around me was able to do with their hands; sibling comparison had no usefulness in my baby growth. It didn't matter that I had better, more important things to do, such as writing this chapter or that I was already so behind with writing. My Little One was where it was right now and noticing its limitation was to serve just as the *baseline* for the growth and learning that was about to follow.

One thing that I needed to learn was to *deal with the pain*; the baby was hurting, crying in discomfort and pain, day and night. I had to learn to go through the process of healing and learning the skills of what I knew my arm had the potential to do, while dealing with the pain. It wasn't only the physical pain, but also the emotional comfort that I needed to provide to my Little One.

Dealing with pain was not an easy thing, accompanied by the process of learning to regain function. I had to keep exercising the fingers, the wrist, the elbow, the shoulder, while accompanied by the pain. I had to work with the pain (the emotional part) to make physical progress, finding the right balance between pain and movement that would help my Little One move forward. If I'd forcefully push against the pain, dismissing its voice and exercising regardless its winning and resistances, inflammation would escalate and it would take me days to bring it back to the level when I would have any chance of working with it.

On the other hand, if I would be too lenient, just listen to the pain and stop exercising all together, my fingers, wrist, arm would get more stuck, atrophying with each day, just as they did while staying on cast. My Little

One was regressing and if I'd let it continue on that path, I would have so much more work bringing it back to the level where it was in the present. They say that you cannot really stagnate; you either progress or regress; you can't keep the same state for a long time. I couldn't just let go all together; giving up on it; I had to fully support Little One to grow into what I knew is capable of doing, despite its current level of development.

I couldn't just avoid it or discard it. So much for my initial relief that it is "only my left arm" when I was right-handed. It didn't take long to realize how limiting it is to function with only half of your body. I couldn't tie my hair or my laces, I couldn't hold a dish so I could wash it with the other hand; I couldn't hug with both of my arms. My left arm was keeping everything in balance. It was a significant part of me and, if I didn't help it grow now, everything I do will be so much harder for the rest of my life. Plus, the pain was a constant motivator, reminding me that it is not a comfortable place to be where I am and I don't want to stay in the place forever.

I had to work with my Little One to help it move forward, *slowly, gently, lovingly; patiently*. The pain was signaling the points of moving out the comfort zone, out of its current abilities. I had to *listen* to the pain and gently take it a little bit further. Not too fast and not too pushy. *Not giving up and not giving in*.

I made the distinction between "good pain" and "bad pain". Good pain was the growth pain, naturally accompanying the process of moving from where it was now to the next level; it didn't cause any physical damage. The "bad pain" was the pain that was damaging; if I force it too hard, I could further misalign the bone or, worse, break it. I kept asking the doctor, who can I make the difference between "good pain" and "bad pain" while exercising. The only answer that I could get was *"only your body can tell you; listen to it"*.

Comparison with the other hand was helpful only to have a model, a reference point of how a healthy hand is able to move. It would serve just as a mirror for exercising. I would exercise both hands at the same time, so the Little One would have the chance to slowly copy what the able one was able to perform.

I had to be aware of staying *away form suffering*. Yes, pain was an inevitable part of the process now; I had to work with it. But suffering was so much more; confusing stories, frustration, helplessness, feeling defeated. I was getting frustrated with the slow, what appeared to be stubborn Little Baby. All the exercises and effort made in one day, the next morning seemed to simply vanish. I was back to square one, starting all over again.

But the day when I was able to hold a piece of paper with my fingers was a day worth of celebration! I kissed my hand and I thanked it for growing so beautifully; for putting up with the pain, the efforts, with me and coming to life! Full blooming hope was filling my heart and I knew that all I need to do is to keep going. I didn't know when I will get there, how I will do it, but as long as I keep going, it will be all right. I am all right, on the right path!